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FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5601  
INFO RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1730  
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
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SUBJECT: Niger: Civil Rights Activist Receives Suspended Sentence

Ref: Niamey 00684

¶1. (SBU) On January 25, the Court of Appeals of Niamey delivered its verdict of a three-month suspended prison sentence on the appeal lodged by Marou Amadou, president of the United Front for the Preservation of Democratic Gains (FUSAD) on charges of "regional propaganda" (Note: meaning inciting neighboring states within the region through the release of false and/or misleading information. End note.) Amadou's camp condemned the conviction and called for the immediate vacation of the courts' rulings against him.

¶2. (SBU) On January 11, Amadou attended hearings on his appeal in the presence of observers from a delegation of the European Union and representatives from the French Embassy and the Swiss Cooperation Mission. Civil society organizations criticized the verdict as a GON attempt to silence Amadou; his lawyers stated that they would appeal the decision to the Supreme Court.

¶3. (SBU) Since June 2009, the Government of Niger (GON) filed lawsuits against Amadou on several charges, including participation in the creation and/or administration of an association without reporting such to the appropriate authorities; incitement of the Armed Forces to disobedience; and endangering state security. Security forces put Amadou under preventive detention on August 11, and then granted provisional release on September 15. The dates for hearings on the three remaining charges have not been determined.

Whitaker